

CHAPTER 134  
CERTIFICATION OF GROUNDWATER PROFESSIONALS

**567—134.1(455G) Definition.** A “groundwater professional” is a person who provides subsurface soil contamination and groundwater consulting services, or who contracts to perform or who supervises remediation or corrective action services at leaking underground storage tank sites. A person who engages only in installation or removal of underground storage tanks and piping is not a “groundwater professional” for the purposes of this chapter.

**567—134.2(455G) Certification requirements.**

**134.2(1)** A groundwater professional must be certified as provided in 134.3(455G) before engaging in activities described in 134.1(455G), except that a person engaging in activities described in 134.1(455G) need not be certified if that person is under direct supervision of a certified groundwater professional when engaging in such activities.

**134.2(2)** In order to be certified as a groundwater professional, a person must be one or more of the following:

- a.* A person certified by the American Institute of Hydrology as a Professional Hydrologist, Professional Hydrogeologist, or Professional Hydrologist (Groundwater).
- b.* A person certified by the National Water Well Association or Association of Groundwater Scientists and Engineers as a Groundwater Professional.
- c.* A person certified by the American Board of Industrial Hygiene as an Industrial Hygienist.
- d.* A professional engineer registered in Iowa.
- e.* A professional geologist certified by a national organization (e.g., American Institute of Professional Geologists, American Association of Petroleum Geologists, Society of Independent Earth Scientists).
- f.* Any person with five years of direct or related experience and training as a groundwater professional or in the field of earth sciences. This must include a minimum of at least two years of education and training, and two years of experience as a groundwater professional.
- g.* Any person with a license, certification, or registration to practice hydrogeology or groundwater hydrology issued by any state in the United States or by a national organization, provided that the license, certification, or registration process requires, at a minimum, both of the following:
  - (1) Possession of a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college.
  - (2) Five years of related professional experience.

**134.2(3)** In order to be certified as a groundwater professional, the applicant must complete the two-day risk-based correction action (RBCA) course and pass a certification examination offered or authorized by the department.

- a.* An applicant who fails an initial examination may take a second examination.
- b.* Failure of the second examination will result in termination of the application. A person may reapply for groundwater professional certification. The applicant must complete a regularly scheduled course of instruction before retaking the certification examination.
- c.* Professional engineers who qualify for an exemption from taking the certification examination under subrule 134.3(6) must attend the RBCA initial course of instruction in order to be certified.

**567—134.3(455G) Certification procedure.**

**134.3(1) Application.** Application for certification shall be made by completing a form provided by the department and submitting evidence of meeting the requirements found in rule 134.2(455G) (i.e., copy of certificate, license, description of experience and training).

**134.3(2) Certification fee.** The initial certification and each renewal application must be accompanied by a nonrefundable fee in the form of a check or money order payable to the Department of Natural Resources. The certification fee is \$200 every two years and must be renewed biennially by January 1 of each even-numbered year (i.e., 1994, 1996, etc.). No proration of certification fees will be done. The department will assess a fee for each training course and examination, based upon the cost of preparation and administration.

**134.3(3)** Rescinded IAB 1/9/02, effective February 13, 2002.

**134.3(4) Certification issuance and renewal.**

*a.* Upon receipt, review and acceptance of the application and certificate fee, the department shall furnish the applicant with a certificate showing the name of the individual and the expiration date.

*b.* In order to remain valid, a groundwater professional certificate must be renewed prior to the expiration date specified on the certificate. Renewal applications must be made on a form provided by the department and must be received by the department or postmarked at least 60 days prior to the expiration date of the registration or certification then in effect. The renewal application must be accompanied by the registration or certification fee specified in subrule 134.3(2) and proof of completing the continuing education requirements in 134.3(5).

**134.3(5) Continuing education.** All groundwater professionals are required to complete at least 12 hours of continuing education during each two-year certification period.

*a.* The initial course of instruction required in subrule 134.2(3) may be applied toward the first certification period's continuing education requirements. Continuing education credits may not be carried forward to the next certification period.

*b.* Continuing education must be in the areas relating to underground storage tank contamination assessment and corrective action activities. Courses other than those provided by the department must be submitted to the department for prior approval as meeting the continuing education requirement.

**134.3(6) Exemption from examination.** The department may provide for an exemption from the certification examination requirements for a professional engineer registered pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 542B upon submission of sufficient proof of exemption to the Iowa comprehensive petroleum underground storage tank fund board as provided in Iowa Code section 455G.18(8). The person must be qualified in the field of geotechnical, hydrological, environmental, groundwater, or hydrogeological engineering. A groundwater professional exempted under this provision must meet the continuing education requirements of subrule 134.3(5).

**567—134.4(455G) Suspension, revocation and denial of certification.**

**134.4(1) General policy.** It is the policy of the department to enforce standards of professional and ethical conduct which are generally accepted within the professions which qualify persons for certification in Iowa as groundwater professionals. The department intends to rely on written standards of professional and ethical conduct and competency which are applicable to persons who qualify for certification by virtue of certification by or membership in a professional organization or state licensure as provided in Iowa Code section 455G.18(2).

It is the policy of the department to investigate and enforce standards of conduct by certified groundwater professionals which fall within the scope of their professional relationships with the department, their clients and other state regulatory agencies including the Iowa comprehensive petroleum underground storage tank fund board and their agents.

**134.4(2) *Lack of qualification.*** The department may suspend, revoke or deny certification as a groundwater professional for any of the following reasons:

- a. A material misstatement of fact in an application for certification.
- b. Failure to provide the fee for certification.
- c. Loss of license, certification, or registration necessary to meet the certification requirements in subrule 134.2(2).
- d. Insufficient proof of qualifications required under rule 134.2(455G).
- e. Failure to successfully complete the certification requirements.
- f. Receipt of a “certificate of noncompliance” with a child support obligation and failure to provide a “withdrawal of a certificate of noncompliance” from the child support recovery unit as provided in Iowa Code chapter 252J.
- g. Default on an obligation owed to or collected by the state as provided in Iowa Code section 421.17(34) “e.”

**134.4(3) *Discipline based on a single act or omission.*** The department may suspend, revoke or deny certification based on substantial evidence of a single act or failure to act. The severity of the sanction may be based on the gravity of the act or omission and on the degree of culpability such as whether it was negligent, knowing, willful, or with such a degree of reckless disregard as to equate with intentional conduct. Single acts or omissions that may be grounds for discipline include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Fraudulent omissions or misstatements of material fact in any reports, correspondence or communications with the department.
- b. Violation of an ethical standard which the person knew or should have known and which results in or reasonably could have resulted in material consequences.
- c. Failure to report the presence of contamination to the parties reasonably believed to be responsible for reporting the contamination to the department as provided in 567—Chapter 131 and 567—135.6(455B).
- d. Knowingly making a material false statement, representation or certification on any application, record, report, or document required to be maintained or submitted by department rule or which is voluntarily submitted to the department.
- e. Gross incompetence in the performance of groundwater professional services and corrective action.
- f. Material misstatement of facts or misrepresentation of information required to be provided pursuant to Iowa Code chapters 455G and 455B, division IV, part 8.

**134.4(4) *Discipline based on repeated acts or omissions.*** The department may suspend, revoke or deny certification, based on substantial evidence of repeated acts or omissions which, when taken together indicate a lack of competency, professionalism, ethical conduct, or adherence to standards of performance generally expected by the profession. The severity of the sanction may be based on the gravity of the acts or omissions and the degree of culpability. Disciplinary sanctions under this subrule will not be applied without providing the person with at least one written notice of the deficiency and a written warning that future repetition may result in discipline. Conduct or omissions which may be a basis for discipline include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Repeated incidents of substandard field investigation may result in suspension or revocation.
- b. Repeated incidents of substandard, inaccurate or incomplete site cleanup reports and failure to follow site cleanup report instructions may result in suspension or revocation.
- c. Conduct warranting a sanction after prior suspension shall result in a more severe sanction.

**134.4(5) *Disciplinary procedure.***

*a.* Prior to issuance of a final department action imposing a disciplinary sanction of suspension, revocation or denial of certification, the department shall conduct such lawful investigation as it deems necessary to substantiate material facts sufficient to warrant a disciplinary sanction. The decision to impose a disciplinary sanction shall be made by the administrator of the environmental protection division.

*b.* Written notice of a sanction shall be sent by restricted certified mail to the person against whom the sanction is imposed. The notice shall provide a brief explanation of the facts relied upon and the sanction to be imposed. The notice shall inform the recipient of applicable appeal rights.

*c.* A person may appeal a decision imposing a suspension, revocation or denial of certification within 30 days of receipt of the notice. Upon timely receipt of the notice of appeal, contested case procedures, including informal settlement, shall apply as provided in 561—Chapter 7. In accordance with 561—subrule 7.5(2), the department shall initiate pleading by the filing of a petition.

*d.* Notwithstanding 561—subrule 7.15(7), the sanction imposed shall not take effect until after a contested case hearing and issuance of a proposed decision. If a timely appeal has not been filed, the sanction is effective after 30 days from receipt of the notice. A party may request stay of the sanction, as provided in 561—subrule 7.15(7), after issuance of a proposed decision.

**134.4(6) *Noncompliance with support order procedures.*** Upon receipt of a certification of noncompliance with a support obligation as provided in Iowa Code section 252J.7, the department will initiate procedures to deny an application for certification or renewal, or to suspend a certification in accordance with Iowa Code section 252J.8(4). The department shall issue a notice by restricted certified mail to the person of its intent to deny or suspend groundwater professional certification based on receipt of a certification of noncompliance. The suspension or denial shall be effective 30 days after receipt of the notice unless the person provides the department with a withdrawal of the certificate of noncompliance from the child support recovery unit as provided in Iowa Code section 252J.8(4) “c.” Pursuant to Iowa Code section 252J.8(4), the person does not have a right to a hearing before the department to contest the denial or suspension action under this subrule but may seek a hearing in district court in accordance with Iowa Code section 252J.9.

**567—134.5(455G) *Penalty.*** A groundwater professional who fails to obtain certification with the department of natural resources as required in this chapter is subject to a civil penalty of \$50. A groundwater professional who knowingly or intentionally makes a false statement or misrepresentation which results in a mistaken classification of a site shall be guilty of a serious misdemeanor and shall have the groundwater professional certification revoked.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 455G.18.

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